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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 09/735,177 | 12/12/2000 | David McCray Peele | 628-318CT | 7421 |
| 20792 | 7590 | 11/13/2003 | | |
| MYERS BIGEL SIBLEY & SAJOVEC PO BOX 37428 RALEIGH, NC 27627 | | | EXAMINER | |
| | | | WALLS, DIONNE A | |
| | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| | | | 1731 | |

DATE MAILED: 11/13/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 09/735,177 | Applicant(s) PEELE, DAVID MCCRAY |
| | Examiner Dionne A. Walls | Art Unit 1731 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 2 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 July 2003 .
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 5-7 and 59 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 5-7 and 59 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

| | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s), _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after allowance or after an Office action under *Ex Parte Quayle*, 25 USPQ 74, 453 O.G. 213 (Comm'r Pat. 1935). Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, prosecution in this application has been reopened pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on July 25th, 2003 has been entered.

Claim Objections

2. The numbering of claims is not in accordance with 37 CFR 1.126 which requires the original numbering of the claims to be preserved throughout the prosecution. When claims are canceled, the remaining claims must not be renumbered. When new claims are presented, they must be numbered consecutively beginning with the number next following the highest numbered claims previously presented (whether entered or not).

Misnumbered claim 1 has been renumbered as claim 59.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 5-7 and 59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Independent claim 59 recites that the barn is modified so as to "permit correlation of the tobacco specific nitrosamine content of said cured tobacco with the actual level of nitric oxides"; however, it is not clear how a barn can be modified to "permit" a correlation. The Examiner believes that a particular correlation (i.e. nitric oxide exposure vs. nitrosamine content) exists whether the barn is modified or not. It appears as if Applicant intends to say that the barn is modified in such a way that the formation of nitrosamines on tobacco is prevented due to the suppression of nitric oxide levels in the barn during curing. If this is the case, the Examiner suggests the following claim language:

"59 (Amended). A method for modifying a tobacco curing barn provided with a direct fire heating unit for the purpose of providing conditions suitable for curing tobacco such that resulting cured tobacco obtained from said barn possesses a tobacco-specific nitrosamine content lower than 2 parts per million, the method comprising:

removing the direct fire heating unit from the tobacco barn,
providing the tobacco barn with a heating unit that does not generate exhaust gases comprising nitric oxides in a fashion that would cause contact between said nitric oxides and said tobacco within said barn, and further modifying said barn to ensure that the nitric oxide level within the barn during tobacco curing is suppressed to prevent formation of tobacco-specific nitrosamines [permit correlation of the tobacco-specific nitrosamine content of said cured tobacco with the actual level of nitric oxides to which said tobacco is exposed in said barn, wherein said barn as modified may be used for the curing of tobacco leaves].

This language is fully supported by the instant specification on page 3, lines 30-34 and page 9, lines 31-32.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dionne A. Walls whose telephone number is (703) 305-0933. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 7AM - 4:30PM (Every other Friday off).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven P. Griffin can be reached on (703) 308-1164. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0661.



Dionne A. Walls
November 9, 2003